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Imagination in Action: Parents and Children Exploring Creativity Together Through a Children's Book

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State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

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A Project in
Creative Studies

by

Erica L. Swiatek

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

*Imagination in action: Parents and children exploring
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The purpose of this project, imagination in action, is to provide a playful way for parents and children to experience and learn a skill together using a story. The story follows a seemingly ordinary toothpaste cap from Russia to Niagara Falls. To learn about the cap's adventure the two main characters put the cap under their pillow, and then they dream of where the cap has gone. To enhance the learning and explain the value and importance of creativity not only for children but also for adults a message for parents, is included in the beginning of the book that is grounded in recent literature and studies of creativity done by experts in the field. The book also provides parents and children with practical ways to enhance their imagination by providing activities at the end of the book.

KEYWORDS: imagination, play, children's book



Erica Swiatek

May 4th, 2012

Date

DEDICATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I am working through my last semester in the Creative Studies program I am so grateful for this experience. This program has had a transforming effect on me and as a result, I believe I have a much better understanding of leadership, problem solving, innovation, intuition and of myself. There are so many people I would like to acknowledge and thank for this experience.

First, I would like to thank Mike Fox. He was my first contact with the Creative Studies program and meeting with him was a very enjoyable experience. In my first class I met Dr. Firestien and from the very first day I knew I had made the right choice. I was blown away by how much I learned, how knowledgeable Roger is and how effortless he made the process appear. After completing this class I was hooked on creative studies. I was also so impressed with Dr. Firestien that I took a good portion of my classes with him and in every course I was challenged, learned a great deal and had a great time.

Next, I would like to thank Dr. Yudess. I am considerably more knowledgeable in facilitating others as a result of what I learned from her. Jo has an incredible depth of experience, understanding and a genuine warmth about her. I have partaken in some wonderful conversations with her and built a bond that I hope will last for a very long time.

Dr. Cyndi Burnett is another professor that after one class with, I would check Banner to see what she was teaching. Her smile and positivity is absolutely contagious. Cyndi always pushed me to do more, and accomplish what I was capable of doing. She took the time to guide me to the best projects I could do, and my work and depth of knowledge wouldn't be what it is

today without her. It was in her holistic class where I began seeing that what I had been studying impacted me as a whole person, and that it was far more than just a cognitive process. I would also like to thank Cyndi for assisting me in choosing this project and for helping me realize a dream I have had for a long time of writing a book.

Taking the creative assessment class with Dr. Cabra reinforced what I was beginning to understand from Cyndi's holistic class. I learned a great deal about myself in this class and I apply this knowledge in many of the things I do. This class was online class, yet Dr. Cabra showed how much he cares for all the graduate students by offering to meet with us every week to answer any questions we had and to explain anything we didn't understand. On a side note, we are both into technical gadgets and I enjoyed our conversations on this subject.

Last but definitely not least, I attended one of my classes with Dr. Puccio. I don't think I will ever forget the first day of class! I want to thank him for modeling playfulness and showing how someone can be both a serious professional and playful. I learned what it means to truly be a creative leader from him, and I know this will help me for years to come.

There were some professors I did not take classes with, but I have joked or talked with them during my tenure at Buffalo State, thank you for your warmth and humor. While in my classes I also built deep friendships with so many people. I know I couldn't list them all but I hope they always know how special and important they are to me.

In addition, I want to thank my family. I love and adore all of you and I appreciate all of the support and help you have given me on this journey. I know I can never repay you, but I will spend my life trying to repay you with laughter, fun and playfulness!

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Section One: Purpose and Description of Project

The purpose of my project was to write and develop a children's story and activities that will allow children ages 3 – 8 and their parents (or guardians) to learn and experience creative behaviors. The book began with a story that focused on a mother providing her children a chance to playfully use their imaginations. After the story, there are imagination activities that parents can do with their children. The book also contains a message to parents about the importance of creativity for both children and adults that is supported and has references to research.

What I hope to accomplish through this project is to open parent's eyes to creativity. I believe that if parents become aware of these skills and the importance they have for their children, they may in turn, adopt some of these behaviors themselves. I would like to make a contribution, even if it is a small one, to our program's mission of igniting creativity worldwide through this project. I am also hoping that by providing a playful way to experience creativity, it will be easier for children and parents to learn and practice using creative skills in their everyday lives.

Rationale for Selection:

This project combined playfulness, story-telling, and imagination. There are several reasons why I chose to do a book for my project. Our final project in CRS 580 Creative Assessment: Methods and Resources, was to take a section of the Creativity Assessment book (Puccio & Murdock, 2007) we were using in class and create a product. I choose to take Kirton's Adaptor Innovator assessment (Kirton, M.J., 1999, pp. 1-8). Since it was Christmas time, I put together a story revolving around Santa's elves and some new elves that were hired from the Keebler factory. Santa's elves were excellent adaptors and the new elves were innovators. The

story explained the difference between the two and how they learned to appreciate each other and work together. I had a good time doing this project; I involved my family by having them help me make props for the story (we made cookies, dressed up the dog, etc.). When I finished, I didn't really think too much of the project. Several of us in the class shared our projects with each other and it was then that I saw there was value in my project. One of my classmates, Kathysue, said she wished she had learned about Kirton's theory this way first because she really connected with it. Even though I know the value of play, Kathysue's comment, reminded me how powerful these tools are for learning.

As I reflected on what Kathysue said, I thought about using the Kirton story the following year during the holidays as a training class that I could offer at work. I showed it to one of my co-workers and she thought it was really fun and easy to understand. So again, I had reinforcement that this was a great way to teach. It also reinforced that I enjoy telling stories and may actually be good at it. So when my professor asked me to think about doing something I wanted to do for my Master's project, not something I *should* do, I thought about all of this and came to the conclusion that I would like to write a children's book.

Also, as I have gone through my classes in the Creative Studies program, I have become very attached to the concept and importance of playfulness. As I read *Play How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul* by Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughan (2010), I learned so much more about the value of play in both creativity and learning. In the book, several play personalities are described including that of the storyteller. The storyteller uses imagination to tell stories, play and become immersed in the stories, characters and the fantasy itself. As I read through the play personalities, the storyteller and joker were the ones I most related to and, in my mind, I see a strong connection between the two (Brown & Vaughan,

2010, pp. 66- 70). Even though I see this in myself, I have never stretched myself to write and publish a story. I have created fun stories and shared them verbally, mostly because I love to make people laugh, but I have never taken the leap to really write and illustrate a story that could be enjoyed on its own. This is a challenging project and a stretch for me. I am excited about the possibilities and risk-taking involved with writing my own book.

Lastly, there are a couple of personal reasons I wanted to do this project. When I worked at a company called ACS (Affiliated Computer Services), I had a director who saw potential and really encouraged me to use my playfulness. She always told me I was the queen of creating games, and she would consistently ask me how we could turn something into a game. It never seemed to matter how elaborate I made the concept either, she would simply let me go and develop a game to reinforce learning for our new hires. I really loved that, and I developed a concept where the new hires had a review day where they created games in teams for half the day and the second half we played the games to review the eight weeks of content. It was amazing what they created. I have worked at two different companies since then and I have not been asked to create games (although now I am asked to do team builders which can be fun as well), but I want to get back to this concept. I want to embody playfulness and fun and tie it to success and learning in various ways. I believe this book will provide me with an opportunity to do that.

The last personal reason may not be very academic at all, but the thought of it has brought me great joy. The story I am using is one that happened with me and my children. I picked an illustrator that captured my children at that point in time in this story. I have thought about how special it will be to give them something tangible to share with their children later on. I have always wanted to write a book, and completing this project will help me fulfill that dream.

Section Two: Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources

Introduction

The literature that will be used for this project can be broken down into four categories. The categories are:

1. Creativity/Thinking Skills
2. Nurturing Creativity in Children
3. Writing a Children's book
4. Children's Books

The first three categories were used as key words in search engines to help find appropriate resources for this project. Information for the last category was gathered during a trip to a local Barnes and Noble bookstore. I also did a review of the books and articles I accumulated while in school. Below are the sources I will be using as I work on this project or embark on this adventure.

Annotated Bibliography

Category 1 -Creativity/Thinking Skills

Brown, Stuart M. W. & Vaughen. C. (2010). *Play how it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*. New York: The Penguin Group.

Play by Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughen discussed the science and practicality of play. The authors' work explored many fascinating aspects of how play impacts learning, survival, social skills and how the basis of human trust is established through play signals. The book explored play personalities, which help us to understand that play is not just physical or a one size fits all. One of the personalities mentioned is a story teller and this concept was helpful

in developing a connection between a story, playfulness and creativity. The authors made a connection between play and how it helps us to solve problems.

Brown, T. (2008, November) *Tim Brown on creativity and play*. Retrieved from:

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/tim_brown_on_creativity_and_play.html

Tim Brown's presentation focused on the concept of playfulness and its link to creativity. He discussed how playfulness enables us to feel freer to make mistakes. He also discussed how adults and children differ in this area by doing an exercise where people would draw the person next to them. There was a lot of embarrassment, laughter and apologizing going on when the pictures were shared. Tim Brown explained that if you do the same exercise with children they are very proud of their pictures, there is no fear, embarrassment, etc. He then went on to say that as we grow older we become more conservative and that may limit us in coming up with or sharing wild ideas that may have a lot of potential.

He explains how play can be used in a pragmatic way to help us be more creative. By using play symbols in our work environments we can be reminded to be more playful. Also, as ideas are needed, there are many things we can do to enhance our creativity, like role playing, building models or creating representations of our ideas using simple items that you might find in a 1st graders classroom. Tim Brown explained that being engaged in play opens up possibilities. Tim Brown stated at IDEO that when they play, there are rules. These rules are hung on the wall and contain concepts like "Defer judgment" or "Go for Quantity". When everyone plays by the rules, Tim said they get more creative outcomes. He also explained that these rules can help limit or reduce embarrassment. For example, if when doing the activity of

drawing the person next to you, you have the person with the worst picture buy the next round of drinks, it makes it fun to take a risk.

Another interesting concept that he covered was knowing when to play and transitioning in and out of play. He explained that when ideas are needed, play is helpful. However, when selecting ideas and developing solutions it may not be appropriate to play. Lastly, he explained that as adults we can be both playful and serious, it's not an either or, it's an "and".

Firestien, R. L. (1995). *Leading on the creative edge*. Williamsville, NY:Innovative Resources.

In his book, Dr. Roger Firestein explored how to redefine or reframe problems or challenges so that they can be solved. Dr. Firestein also looked at concepts such as developing a creative psychological or physical environment and generating as many ideas as possible. His work focused on many creative habits that we can also use to be more creative like stepping away from the challenge for a little while to allow for incubation time. The author also recommended reading a variety of articles, books, etc. to trigger ideas. Other recommendations the author gave was to stop some of the action and live a healthier lifestyle, doing these things also helps us to be more creative.

The author covered many simple tools in this book that can be used both professionally and personally when looking for new and novel ways to solve challenges or accomplish goals. Dr. Firestein's work covered all the necessary tools to go through the whole Creative Problem Solving process from clarifying the challenge, to generating ideas, to creating a plan of action. The author's work provided a solid foundation for professionals to see the value in changing habits, using creativity and provided a solid framework for how to implement these skills.

Meier, D. (2000). *The accelerated learning handbook*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

The accelerated learning handbook by Dave Meier takes a look at the background of learning. It addressed the challenges and offered solutions that can be implemented to accelerate learning. One of the challenges that was mentioned is that education is often disciplined, geared for one learning style and involves only one correct answer. The book addressed this by saying that learning involves the whole body, emotions and all of the senses.

Accelerated learning programs and activities allow learners to create and absorb concepts. One of the comments that the author made is that “we learn to swim by swimming”. It is this concept that led me to want to include activities that both the children and parents could use to enhance their creativity.

Puccio, G. (2011, June 15) *Creativity 101: 21st century skill*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0of6qe9Jj0>

In this video, Dr. Puccio discussed Buffalo States mission of igniting creativity worldwide by facilitating the recognition of creativity as a life skill. The central theme of Dr. Puccio’s presentation was the pace of change is faster than it has ever been. We are experiencing more life alternating inventions than any other time in history. Our rapidly changing world has made it harder to predict what the world will look in 15 years, and it’s predicted that today’s student will change jobs eleven times between the ages of 18 and 42.

Dr. Puccio also discussed how today’s workforce is more focused on imagination and creativity. The education system has also witnessed this trend and in several reports they have concluded that creativity is a crucial skill of the 21st century.

Category 2 –Nurturing Creativity in Children

Batey, M. (2011, August 4) *The key skill for the 21st century is creativity: Dr Mark Batey*.

Retrieved from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dw5klCFy1t8>

In *The key skill for the 21st century is creativity*, Dr. Mark Batey discussed how psychological tools, tips and techniques can be useful to organizations. Dr. Batey stated that creativity will be the key skill for the 21st century for everyone in the organization and that psychometric tools can be used to help recruit people with this skill set. Dr. Batey specified that organizations need to do more than just offer a couple of creativity training programs. They need to look at the corporate climate, culture, the individual, and teams as a whole. He talked about the need for diversity in work groups in areas such as age, gender, psychological differences, attitudes, and personalities. Dr. Batey also discussed how leaders need to model behaviors such as open, honest communication as well risk taking and being accepting of failure.

He also referred to the Creativity Crisis, which is a report that was done in the United States that looked at 300,000 school children over a 35 year period. What the research found was that since 1990 creative thinking skills have been in sharp decline in American schools. He concluded that the skill that currently is and will be most in demand for organizations is a skill that children are leaving schools without. As a result organizations are left with having to find a way to fill that gap.

Boyd, H. (2012, January). *Nurturing you Child's Creativity*. Retrieved from education.com:

http://www.education.com/magazine/article/nurturing_childs_creativity/

In this article, Hanna Boyd examined how parents may feel that creativity is simply about art and story-telling. Parents may believe that it is not as important as math or reading. The author explained that this is absolutely wrong and delves into the fact that creativity is about far more than making art; it's about problem solving and making scientific discoveries. Hanna

Boyd then offered ways that parents can help to encourage a child's creativity. Her suggestions included things like letting a child improvise to find her own solution, building confidence, praising originality and turning off the television.

Channel News Asia. (2010, December 27) *21st Century skills through kids Invent etc.* Retrieved from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIoeOHlgM10>

In this video, Dr. Ed Soby talks about how he interviewed famous inventors who developed inventions like the MRI, cat scans and pacemakers. What he found was that these inventors were not necessarily the best students, but they turned out to be great inventors. Dr. Sobe took what he learned and created a program called "Kids invent to help kids succeed". The premise of the program is that children use toys that they themselves build without instruction, to learn about science. His mission is to make science fun and have children learn by doing. He believed in having them problem solve first and then he taught the concepts afterwards. Dr. Sobe said if children are taught the concepts first, they learn only how to memorize information and with that they can pass the test, but they will fail in life. In his interview, Dr. Sobe also talked about how fast a child can learn by building and how it really accelerates the learning process. He said the motivation he sees when a child is building the toy car is the same he saw in these great inventors. The skills the children learn are to observe, report and associate cause and effect by making one change at a time. As they were building, Dr. Sobe asked them questions. He believed questions get your brain working while being told concepts or facts causes your brain to stop working.

Miranda, C. A. (2012, January 3). *Why we need to let kids be creative*. Retrieved from

<http://www.cnn.com: http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/03/living/let-kids-be-creative-p/index.html>

Why we need to let kids be creative by Carolina Miranda explained that by providing children with more free time, we are in fact allowing them to be more creative. The article used the example of a child playing with blocks, the blocks fell over and the child (because she was left alone) used divergent thinking to figure out other ways to build the structure she wanted without it falling down. The article talked about the creativity crisis and how scores for kindergartners through third graders decreased the most, and those from fourth through sixth grades decreased the next largest amount. The article also covered Torrance test of creativity and how that assessment is a better indicator of lifetime creativity than the child's IQ.

In the article the problem of schools spending more time drilling for exams then supporting creative learning was also explored. Some solutions they suggested is to have teachers and care givers be creative. By modeling creative behaviors and doing creative activities with the child, creativity can be enhanced. In the article Rex Jung Ph.D. a clinical neuropsychologist discussed the importance of play and how it encourages free association. Jung said "If you're just a sponge, you may be able to regurgitate facts, but you can't combine them in novel and useful ways."

Robinson, K. (2006, June) *Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity*. Retrieved From:

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html

Ken Robinson's presentation is a fascinating look at today's education system and how it may be preventing children from being prepared for the future. This is in part because we are not sure what the future will even look like in five years, much less when children entering

school will retire, there is a lot of uncertainty and yet we need to educate children to be ready for the future.

Ken Robinson said we can better prepare children by focusing on creativity. He felt that we should put just as much importance on creativity, as reading or writing. He also discussed how children naturally have certain creative behaviors like being okay with taking risks and making mistakes and how today's education system stigmatizes those behaviors. Ken Robinson talked about the hierarchy of subjects and how math and reading are listed higher than things like art and dance. He explained though that there is a connection between the mind and the body and how important it is for children to have the flexibility to use their bodies while in school (for example being able to take a dance class everyday). In conclusion, he discussed that we need to radically rethink our view of intelligence.

Category 3 – Writing a Children's Book

Buccieri, L. R. & Economy, P. (2005). *Writing children's books for dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing.

A new writer is taken through the various types of children's books and tips for understanding the age group one would be writing for by Lisa Rojany Buccieri & Peter Economy. The authors also take a new author through the process of writing the story, as well as showing how to promote and publish a book. The authors offered practical tips, as well as showing the realistic side of writing a book.

eHow. (2012, January). *How to write a children's book*. Retrieved from eHow:

http://www.ehow.com/how_2054082_write-childrens-book.html

How to write a children's book by eHow walked through the definition and a set of instructions for putting together a children's book. This article walked the reader through planning and writing a book. Some key points the article mentioned were being aware of the age group you are writing to, choosing the right genre, creating character sketches and an outline.

The article also offered some tips & warnings. For example, the article suggested that you visit the library or bookstore and read books in the category /age group you will be writing for.

Fabiano, A. L. (2006). *Writing a children's book*. (Master's Project). Retrieved from:

<http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativestudies/>

Writing a children's book was Andrea Fabiano's 2006 masters project. In it she walked through the process, components and process for writing a children's book. Her project was centered around a children's birthday party where a trunk of hats are brought out. By putting on one of the hats the child's imagination transformed them. For example, the main character of the story, Chad became a baseball player by putting on a baseball hat. The project contained several useful pieces of information such as a timeline for writing a children's book, as well as a pluses, potentials and concerns on the process of writing the book.

Category 4 – Children Book's

Bruel, N. (2008). *Bad kitty takes a bath*. Harrisburg, VA: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company.

Bad kitty takes a bath is about a kitty that is actually bad and you can easily see that from the picture of the kitty. The book is loaded with science information, and is both educational and funny, and can be enjoyed by both children and adults.

Reynold, P. (2004). *Ish*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

The message of *Ish* focused around the importance of being OK with things not being perfect. The central theme of the book was to do what we love and not let others take it away from us. *Ish* also focused on how we should look at things in another way. It is a simple story with a wonderful message. There was a lot captured in a few words.

Shoemaker, C. (2009). *Allergy tales: a birthday party*. East Amherst, NY:

ALLERGYONBOARD

Allergy tales a birthday party is the second story in the allergy tales series. In this book, AJ has been invited to attend a birthday party and is afraid his mother won't let him go because of the dangers of the food he will be around. The mother taught him a rhyme to help him be prepared to say no to foods he can't eat kindly and politely. This story helps children with allergies to address issues they will come in contact with on a regular basis.

Shoemaker, C. (2009). *Allergy tales: making friends*. East Amherst, NY: ALLERGYONBOARD

Allergy tales making friends is an easy to read children's story about a child named AJ who has food allergies. His mother created a rhyme to help him realize that it's all right to be different and that his differences make him special. This book brought awareness and made children with allergy issues realize that they are not alone, are special and can easily make friends.

In addition to the work reviewed above, I also used the following references in researching this project.

Selected Bibliography

Category 1 -Creativity/Thinking Skills

Brown, S. & Vaughen. C. (2010). *Play how it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*. New York, NY: The Penguin Group.

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Category 2 –Nurturing Creativity in Children

Batey, M. (2011, August 4) *The key skill for the 21st century is creativity: Dr Mark Batey*.

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<http://www.cnn.com>: <http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/03/living/let-kids-be-creative-p/index.html>

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http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html

Virginia Beach School (2011, June 7) *21st Century skills in action: Critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s6PIrXwt7M>

Category 3 – Writing a Children’s Book

Buccieri, L. R. & Economy, P. (2005). *Writing children's books for dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing.

Cohen, C. D. (2004). *The Seuss, the whole Seuss and nothing but the Seuss: A visual biography of Theodor Seuss Geisel*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

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Category 4 – Children Book’s

Beard, G. & Hutchins, H. (2011). *Super diaper baby the invasion of the potty snatchers*. New

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Shoemaker, C. (2009). *Allergy Tales A Birthday Party*. East Amherst, NY:

ALLERGYONBOARD

Shoemaker, C. (2009). *Allergy Tales Making Friends*. East Amherst, NY:

ALLERGYONBOARD

Section Three: How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes?

Introduction

When I began this project, I spent some time brainstorming the various steps or tasks I thought I might encounter. The process plan I will used to navigate through my project is in the table shown below.

Project Timeline:

Table 1

	Activity/Task:	Due Date:	Time Spent on Task:	Contingent on:
	CONCEPT PAPER			
1	Concept Paper (draft, review, submitted)	01/30/2012	20 hours	n/a
2	Review Sounding Board Partners Paper & Provide Feedback	02/03/2012	2 hours	n/a
3	Concept Paper Corrections	02/13/2012	2 hours	n/a
4	Final Concept Paper Due	02/13/2012	n/a	n/a
	Total hours for this section		24	
	RESEARCH			
5	Research literature on writing a Children's Book.	02/26/2012	16 hours	n/a

6	Read research on Nurturing Creativity in Children. Look for examples and explanations on what happens when it is nurtured vs. when it is diminished or ignored.	02/20/2012	8 hours	n/a
7	Research the information regarding Creativity being seen as the number 1 skill of the 21st century.	02/20/2012	3 hours	n/a
8	Research Lu Lu to learn about self-publishing and determine book needs (size, cost, etc.)	02/26/2012	3 hours	n/a
9	Research creativity materials to determine what to include on creativity and Imagination.	02/26/2012	8 hours	n/a
10	Do informational interview with Carrie Shoemaker to learn about her experiences writing children's books.	03/21/2012	2 hours (including prep time)	Step 5
11	Review children's books for the age group I am targeting.	03/11/2012	4 hours	
Total hours for this section			44	
SECTION 1 - 3				
12	Update and expand on Section One: Background to the Project.	03/05/2012	1 hour	n/a
13	Create an annotated bibliography.	03/05/2012	16 hours	Steps 5-7 & 9
14	Update and expand on Process Plan if necessary.	03/05/2012	1 hour	n/a
15	Gather feedback from Sounding Board Partner and Advisor and make corrections.	03/05/2012	2 hours	Steps 11, 12, & 13
Total hours for this section			20	
DEVELOP STORY				
16	Find an Illustrator.	03/1/2012	2 hours	n/a
17	Storyboard or Outline Story.	03/09/2012	10 hours	n/a
18	Develop story and write first draft.	03/19/2012	16 hours	Step 16
19	Work with illustrator on images for the book.	03/19/2012	6 hours	Step 15
20	Write Message to Parents about the importance of Creativity.	03/21/2012	3 hours	n/a
21	Write dedication.	03/23/2012	1 hour	n/a
22	Get all illustrations updated/done and in the book.	03/26/2012	2 hours	n/a
23	Corrections and revisions to story	04/08/2012	10 hours	Steps 15-21
Total hours for this section			50	
DEVELOP ACTIVITIES				
23	Design imagination exercises that parents can do with their children.	03/21/2012	6 hours	n/a
24	Acquire illustrations if necessary for the activities.	03/26/2012	2 hours	n/a
25	Create map activity that parents can use with their	03/26/2012	4 hours	Steps 17 & 18

	child to follow the main character.			
	Total hours for this section		12	
	PUBLISHING			
25	Work with Lu Lu to get everything together for publishing and finalize process. Also order a couple of the books for readings.	04/23/2012	3 hours	n/a
	Total hours for this section		3	
	AUDIENCE ACTIVITIES			
26	Do readings at the Niagara Falls and LaSalle Libraries.	04/09/2012	3 hours	n/a
27	Provide copies of the book to several parents and grandparents that I know who have already requested a copy. Gather feedback from each of them. Feedback could be gathered via survey.	04/04/2012	2 hours	n/a
28	Ask some of my classmates and professors who have small children if they would be willing to read it to their child and provide feedback.	04/04/2012	2 hours	n/a
29	Reach out to the National Institute of Play to see if I could do a reading there.	Will complete in May or June of 2012	2 hours	n/a
30	Tweak story based on feedback and after some incubation time. Review book content to ensure it is meaningful.	04/08/2012	4 hours	n/a
	Total hours for this section		13	
	SECTION 4-6			
30	Outcomes Section: Review book and determine what pieces I would include (excerpts and images), as a couple of the activities.	04/09/2012	6 hours	n/a
31	Key Learning's: Document key learning's breaking them into categories to make it easier to read.	04/09/2012	6 hours	n/a
32	Conclusions: Write about any next directions or where I see myself going after this project.	04/09/2012	6 hours	n/a
33	Gather feedback from Sounding Board Partner and Advisor and make corrections.	04/23/2012	3 hours	n/a
34	Put project together in final form.	04/23/2012	6 hours	n/a
35	Prepare for project presentation.	04/23/2012	3 hours	n/a
	Total hours for this section		30	
	CELEBRATION			
36	Have a party with friends and family to celebrate completion of book.	05/11/2012	2 hours	n/a

37	Review feedback and testimonials gathered from audience. Use some of these in book if there is enough time.	05/11/2012	2 hours	n/a
38	Sign up for New Experts Night in May	05/13 -05/15/2012	n/a	n/a
	Total hours for this section		4	
	TOTAL HOURS		200	

Section Four: Outcomes

Introduction

The goal of my project was to write a children's book which would introduce and teach a creative behavior. Before I began writing the book, I created an outline and story board for the book. The storyboard is a large poster board with different types of post-it notes (**Appendix B**). The apple post-it's tracked where the main character Casey would go on his adventures, and the other notes were used to track how Casey would travel from place to place and what he would see while there.

As I was developing the idea of the story, I decided to hire an illustrator to do the graphics for the book. One of the things I really wanted in the book were nice images, to fully engage children. I reached out to one of my classmates Dee Dee Clohessy to do the illustrations. In our first meeting, Dee Dee mentioned that working on a children's book was a dream of hers and so we decided it would be a win-win for both of us. My meetings with her have been very productive. Dee Dee has brought life to the story with the images she created as well as providing me with energy by bringing playfulness back to the story when I felt drained.

I also realized I needed to do some research on children's books. The research I did was centered on writing styles and learning what children in my targeted age group were interested in, as well as looking at the various illustrations and layouts of the books. I took my niece, who

is just slightly older than the age group I was writing for, to Barnes & Noble to do the research. We took several pictures of the books that are currently out and typed up some notes on the experience (**Appendix C**).

Another topic of research that I was fortunate to experience early in the process was interviewing a children's writer. Carey Shoemaker, whom I work with, has written two children's books. Carey's books revolve around children with allergies and her books are titled Allergy Tales. I learned a great deal about the process of writing a book, marketing and publishing tips as well as things to watch out for from my interview with Carey. I left the interview with both tangible and intangible pieces of information. Carey gave me helpful websites and went through parts of the process that took her a lot longer than she had anticipated. For example, rephrasing parts of the story and reviewing the illustrations. Carey explained that when she acquired the illustrations she needed to review them with a careful eye because she saw things like height and hair color differences of the main character in the various images. She also explained there was a lot more detail work in the process than she had anticipated. One of the biggest take-a-ways for me in the interview was her husband's involvement. My husband has been a huge help in developing the story, he had the idea of having a map and then he even created it for me. It was also nice to find out that she wrote these books in part so her son would have a physical hard copy of the story she used to tell him. I was excited to hear someone else talking about creating something like this for her child, since I also wanted to do this for my children.

As I began writing the book, I decided the beginning of the book should include a message to parents (**Appendix D**). The essence of the message was to explain the importance of creativity as a life skill for both parents and children and to look at how important creativity is in

the business world and offer some practical suggestions to enhance creativity. One of the main goals I am trying to accomplish in this project is to impact parents through their children. My hope is that the message to parents will set some of the ground work for that. After the message to parents I created a short playful story. The story is near and dear to my heart since it is based on a real experience my children and I shared. Below is an excerpt from the beginning of the story to provide an overview of what the story is all about:

One morning, Lance and Danny ran quickly to their mother. “Mom, Mom” they shouted. “We found something!”

“What is it?” she asked. “I think it’s a cap,” Danny said. “We found it at the bottom of the tub,” Lance added.



Figure 1. Danny and Lance illustration.

Mom took the cap and carefully examined it for a minute. “Why, this is no ordinary cap!” she said. “This is Casey Cap, he is very special. I can’t believe you found him!”



Figure 2. Casey Cap.

Casey is a magical cap who has traveled a long way to visit you. He has been on many adventures. If you put him under your pillow you will dream of all the places he has been! Would you like to do that?"

Both boys nodded their heads up and down. They immediately went to work on a calendar to plan on which nights each boy would get to dream with Casey.

As the story progresses, Danny and Lance dream of all the places and adventures Casey has been on. Casey begins his adventures with a crab fisherman. The fisherman is trying to brush his teeth and he squeezes the toothpaste so hard that the cap flies off and out the window and is immediately swallowed by a whale. The whale takes Casey to Alaska where he ends up on a cruise ship.

One of my objectives was to make the story as exciting as possible. Casey travels very far and uses many different modes of transportation. Casey travels on a boat, by whale, plane, train, automobile, hiker, etc. As Casey travels he stops at many exciting locations like the Seattle Fish Market, the Grand Canyon, and the African American Museum among other places. Casey also experiences many exciting adventures like being part of an old western shot out, hiking and white water rafting.



Figure 3. Casey peeking out of backpack.

As the children share their dreams with their mother and father, the father creates a map to track Casey and his mode of transportation (**Appendix E**). As the dreams progress, the family begins to see that Casey is actually on route to end up at their house.

After Danny and Lance realize how Casey ended up at their house they take Casey on some adventures themselves. During a trip to New York City Casey is snatched up by a bird flying by and then he is dropped onto a ferry below. The children are upset, but the mother tells them:

“Casey shared his adventures with you through your dreams. Someone else may have seen him as just an ordinary toothpaste cap. But because you used your imagination, Casey wasn’t limited to being ordinary; he was extraordinary. Hopefully, the next family who finds him will recognize Casey the Cap and dream of all his adventures, including his newest ones he had with both of you.” And with that Danny, Lance and Kayla waived good bye to Casey.

At the end of the story are several imagination activities that children can do (as well as parents) and activities designed for parents (which children can do too). It is my hope that

through these three components that parents will become excited to share creativity with their children, that they will want to be more creative themselves, and that the children hearing the story will grow into creative adults.

Section Five: Key Learning's

Introduction

Writing a book has always been a dream of mine, hence, as I write this paper I am almost to a point of realizing this dream. For this, I wish to say thank you to my professor Cyndi for setting me on a path that has led me to this point. Realizing a dream that you have is both exciting and a little intimidating. In my mind, I have built up what it would be like to be an author since I was a small child, so finally accomplishing it and wondering what impact the book might have is exciting. Through this process I have learned so much and have had several things reinforced. I went back and reviewed my concept paper and it was nice to see that I had accomplished all of the personal goals I set at the beginning of the project. As I conclude this process, the following are some key things I am taking with me:

1. **Writing a children's book is a lot harder than it looks on the surface.** This may be the biggest thing I have learned. For me, telling stories is easy, so I didn't think it would be that difficult to document the story. What I found is that there is a lot of behind the scenes work that people do to make a story come to life. The outlines and storyboards and then the revisions and corrections all added up to be a lot of work in this process.
2. **Details are important.** By nature I am not a detail person, but I quickly saw the importance of the details and knew I would have to adapt to ensure the project was a quality one. For this reason, I asked several people to review my story for grammar,

spelling, and logic errors. Gathering errors and making the corrections was by far the most difficult part of the project for me. Creating the storyboard, outline, writing the story and working with Dee Dee on the illustrations was actually like playing for me. But having someone tell me something was wrong with the stories logic and having to rethink and rework the story, the map, etc. was very hard for me.

Another detail that I am glad I noticed was doing research on books that were currently out for my targeted age group. I learned a lot about the types of books, the illustrations and writing styles before attempting to write this book. This research really helped direct me in the method of writing this book.

3. **Project and Time Management.** I learned that I was better at project and time management than I originally thought. Every time I met with Dee Dee, I brought a calendar and we discussed dates, next meetings, etc. I worked all semester to make sure that I was hitting deadlines as much as I could from my concept paper. Even with managing deadlines though, I hit unexpected obstacles and didn't proceed quite as far as I wanted to at times.
4. **I wasn't aware of everything that was needed to write a book.** For example, I built my project timeline and as I went through the project I realized I had no idea how long certain aspects of the project would take (like the storyboarding and illustrations), so I had to adapt as I went along.
5. **A sense of accomplishment.** I am really excited about the fact I completed the story and that with the illustrations, this book will be something I can really be proud of. I am also pleased with the fact that when I read the book to the children in my Sunday school class the book was well received. I only had one child who was a little antsy during the

reading and she was the youngest, but the rest of the kids (who span my whole age group) were really engaged and seemed to want to know what Casey was going to do next. Since I didn't have the final illustrations my husband improvised during the reading and drew a face on a glue stick cap and put Casey on the table while we read. The children made me feel really good at the end of the story because they all clapped.


I still have more work to do gathering additional feedback and making some final corrections before I publish this, but I am so excited about seeing my name with the book on Amazon. What really makes my heart feel warm is that I can give both of my children a copy with a hand written note, and that they will have this memory.

Section Six: Conclusion


Introduction

Success of this project will lead to other books, and each book will use a story to illustrate a creative behavior in action and have activities that parents can do with their children to reinforce the behavior. The creative behaviors I hope to teach through future stories will be:

 Playfulness

 Curiosity

 Risk Taking/Making Mistakes

 Tolerance for Ambiguity

This list is not all inclusive and could be expanded to include parts of the Creative Problem Solving process like clarifying the problem, divergent and convergent thinking and action planning.

As I reflect on this project, what was reinforced about creativity for me is that all of the parts in the process are important. When doing a project like this one, it is important that you understand what your strengths and gaps are. I personally know that I am strong in ideation and implementation, so I sought out tools to use to help me clarify the project as well as asking for insight from people I believe to be strong in this area. I also did the same thing for the development portion of the project. I know that my husband is a very strong developer so when he began looking at what I was doing and said “well you have to have a map for people to follow the cap” I thought, wow, I hadn’t even considered that but it would add a wonderful, educational, and fun element to the story. There were many times throughout the project that I sought out assistance to make sure I wasn’t skipping a vital step. This was challenging as a high implementer, because in my mind, I thought I knew what the project should be and I was set on just putting that into action. Having several people assist me and having time to incubate, I now realize the final project is so much better than I had originally envisioned. Having a better understanding of how impactful others can be to the success of a project will help me as I begin to work on building a consulting business. As I design programs and tools I will seek out other input and build in more time to incubate and redesign the programs.

My next steps with this project are to finalize all of the illustrations and make some last edits to the story. I had several people tell me I should mix up how and when Danny & Lance talk about their dreams that it shouldn’t just be as soon as they wake up. I want to take some time to think about how that might happen. Once I figure it out, I want to do a couple more readings (and revisions if necessary) before publishing. I have reached out to the Play museum in Rochester as well as the Niagara Falls library to do a reading in the near future. Because I am so passionate about this project, I do not want to let the publishing of this project slip. Dee Dee has

been helping me to prepare the book for publishing by talking to me about final fonts and page sizes and layouts. Dee Dee and I are both planning on finishing our portion of the project by the end of June and I will publish the book immediately after that using Lu Lu.com.

Lastly, I would like to create more children's books on creative behaviors. I see a huge potential for impacting parents through their children and I also see opportunities with these books as a consultant. I would love to be conducting a training session and have these books available at the end and be able to tell participants that the valuable information they just learned is also available for them to take home and share with their children!

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Section Seven

Appendices:

A: Concept Paper

B: Storyboard and Partial Outline

C: Children's Book Research

D: Message to Parents

E: Casey Cap's Map

Appendix A: Concept Paper

Concept Paper – CRS 690

Title of Project: Imagination in action: Parents and children exploring creativity together through a children's book.

Name: Erica Swiatek

Date Submitted:

02/13/2012


Project Type: Use a Skill/Talent to Improve the Quality of Life for Others

Section One: Purpose and Description of Project


The purpose of my project is to use a children's story and activities to connect both children and their parents to creative behaviors. This project will provide an opportunity for children ages 3 – 8 and parents to experience creative behaviors together. The book will begin with a story that focuses on a mother providing her children a chance to playfully use their imaginations. After the story, there will be a set of imagination activities that parents can do with his or her children. The book will also contain a message to parents about the importance of creativity for both children and adults that is supported and contains references to research.

Success of this project will lead to other books, each one will use a story to illustrate a creative behavior in action and have activities that parents can do with their children to reinforce the behavior. The creative behaviors I hope to teach through future stories will be:

 Playfulness

 Curiosity

 Risk Taking/Making Mistakes

 Tolerance for Ambiguity

This list is not all inclusive and could be expanded to include parts of the Creative Problem Solving process like clarifying the problem, divergent and convergent thinking and action

planning. What I hope to accomplish through this project is to open parents eyes to creativity. I believe that if parents become aware of these skills and the importance they have for their children, they may in turn adopt some of these behaviors themselves. I would like to make a contribution, even if it is a small one, to our program's mission of igniting creativity worldwide through this project. I am also hoping that by providing a playful way to experience creativity, that it will be easier for children and parents to learn and practice using creative skills in their everyday lives.

Rationale for Selection:

My project will combine playfulness, story-telling and imagination and there are several reasons that I chose to do a book for my project. Our final project in CRS 580 Creative Assessment: Methods and Resources was to take a section of the Creativity Assessment book (Puccio & Murdock, 2007) we were using in class and create a product. I choose to take Kirton's Adaptor Innovator assessment. Since it was Christmas time, I put together a story revolving around Santa's elves and some new elves that were hired from the Keebler factory. Santa's elves were excellent adaptors and the new elves were innovators. The story explains the difference between the two and how they learned to appreciate each other and work together. I had a good time doing this project; I involved my family by having them help me make props for the story (we made cookies, dressed up the dog, etc.). When I finished I didn't really think too much of the project. Several of us in the class shared our projects with each other and it was then that I saw there was value in my project. One of my classmates, Kathysue, said she wished she had learned about Kirton's theory this way first because she really connected with it. It was that comment that made me think about how, even though I know the value of play and imagination, I often forget how powerful these tools are for learning and I don't use them enough.

As I reflected on what Kathysue said, I thought about using the Kirton story the following year during the holidays as a training class that I could offer at work. I showed it to one of my co-workers and she thought it was really fun and easy to understand. So again I had reinforcement that this is a great way to teach. It also reinforced that I enjoy telling stories and may actually be good at it. So when Cyndi asked me to think about doing something I wanted to do, not something I thought I *should* do for my Master's project I thought about all of this and came to the conclusion I would like to do a children's book.

Also, as I have gone through my classes in the Creative Studies program, I have become very attached to the concept and importance of playfulness. As I read *Play How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul* by Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughan (2010), I learned so much more about the value of play in both creativity and learning. In the book several play personalities are described including that of the storyteller. The storyteller uses imagination to tell stories, play and become immersed in the stories, characters and the fantasy itself. As I read through the play personalities, the storyteller and joker were the ones I most related to and, in my mind, I see a strong connection between the two (Brown & Vaughan, 2010 p. 66- 70). Even though I see this in myself, I have never stretched myself to write and publish a story. I have created fun stories and shared them verbally, mostly because I love to make people laugh, but I have never taken the leap to really write and illustrate a story that could be enjoyed on its own. I believe this project will be challenging and a stretch for me but I am excited about the possibilities and the risk-taking involved.

Lastly, there are a couple of personal reasons I wanted to do this project. When I worked at a company called ACS (Affiliated Computer Services), I had a director who saw potential and really encouraged me to use fun and playfulness. She always told me I was the queen of creating

games and she would consistently ask me how we could turn something into a game. It never seemed to matter how elaborate I made the concept either, she would let me go and develop a game to reinforce learning for our new hires. I really loved that, and I developed a concept where the trainees had a review day where they created games in teams for half the day and the second half we played the games to review the eight weeks of content. It was amazing what they created. I have worked at two different companies since then and I have not been asked to create games (although now I am asked to do team builders which can be fun as well), but I want to get back to this concept. I want to embody playfulness and fun and tie it to success and learning in various ways. I believe this book will provide me with an opportunity to do that.

The last personal reasons may not be very academic at all, but the thought of it has brought me great joy. The story I will be using is one that happened with me and my children. As I pick an illustrator, I want to capture my children at that point in time in this story. I have thought about how special it will be to get them something tangible to share with their children later on. I have also always wanted to write a book and completing this project will help me fulfill that dream.

Section Two: Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources:

The literature that will be used for this project can be broken down into three categories. The categories are:

1. Creativity/Thinking Skills
2. Nurturing Creativity in Children
3. Writing a Children's book

These categories were used as key words in search engines to help find appropriate resources for this project. I also did a review of the books and articles I accumulated while in school. Below are the sources I will be using as I work on this project or embark on this adventure.

Category 1 -Creativity/Thinking Skills

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Category 2 –Nurturing Creativity in Children

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Category 3 – Writing a Children’s Book

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Section Three: How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes?

To begin the project, I spent some time brainstorming the various steps or tasks I thought I might encounter. The process plan I will be using to navigate through my project is in the table shown below. Since this is the first time I am doing a project like this, I am sure I will have to adapt to things that I have not planned for and/or adjust my timeline as I progress through the project.

Prepare Project Timeline:

Table 2

	Activity/Task	Due Date	Time Needed	Contingent on:
	CONCEPT PAPER			
1	Concept Paper (draft, review, submitted)	01/30/2012	8 hours	n/a
2	Review Sounding Board Partners Paper & Provide Feedback	02/03/2012	2 hours	n/a
3	Concept Paper Corrections	02/13/2012	2 hours	n/a
4	Final Concept Paper Due	02/13/2012	n/a	n/a

	Total hours for this section		12	
	RESEARCH			
5	Research literature on writing a Children's Book.	02/26/2012	16 hours	n/a
6	Read research on Nurturing Creativity in Children. Look for examples and explanations on what happens when it is nurtured vs. when it is diminished or ignored.	02/20/2012	8 hours	n/a
7	Research the information regarding Creativity being seen as the number 1 skill of the 21st century.	02/20/2012	3 hours	n/a
8	Research Lu Lu to learn about self-publishing and determine book needs (size, cost, etc.)	02/26/2012	3 hours	n/a
9	Research creativity materials to determine what to include on creativity and Imagination.	02/26/2012	8 hours	n/a
10	Do informational interview with Carrie Shoemaker to learn about her experiences writing children's books.	03/01/2012	2 hours (including prep time)	Step 5
	Total hours for this section		40	
	SECTION 1 - 3			
11	Update and expand on Section One: Background to the Project.	03/05/2012	8 hours	n/a
12	Create an annotated bibliography.	03/05/2012	8 hours	Steps 5-7 & 9
13	Update and expand on Process Plan if necessary.	03/05/2012	2 hours	n/a
14	Gather feedback from Sounding Board Partner and Advisor and make corrections.	03/05/2012	2 hours	Steps 11, 12, & 13
	Total hours for this section		20	
	DEVELOP STORY			
15	Find an Illustrator.	03/1/2012	3 hours	n/a
16	Storyboard or Outline Story.	03/09/2012	3 hours	n/a
17	Develop story and write first draft.	03/19/2012	10 hours	Step 16
18	Work with illustrator on images for the book.	03/19/2012	4 hours	Step 15
19	Write Message to Parents about the importance of Creativity.	03/21/2012	4 hours	n/a
20	Write dedication.	03/23/2012	1 hour	n/a
21	Get all illustrations updated/done and in the book.	03/26/2012	2 hours	n/a
	Total hours for this section		27	
	DEVELOP ACTIVITIES			

22	Design imagination exercises that parents can do with their children.	03/21/2012	8 hours	n/a
23	Acquire illustrations if necessary for the activities.	03/26/2012	2 hours	n/a
	Total hours for this section		10	
	PUBLISHING			
24	Work with Lu Lu to get everything together for publishing and finalize process. Also order a couple of the books for readings.	03/27/2012	3 hours	n/a
	Total hours for this section		3	
	AUDIENCE ACTIVITIES			
25	Do readings at the Niagara Falls and LaSalle Libraries. Work with Dana Calanan to set these up.	04/04/2012	3 hours	n/a
26	Provide copies of the book to several parents and grandparents that I know who have already requested a copy. Gather feedback from each of them. Feedback could be gathered via survey.	04/04/2012	2 hours	n/a
27	Ask some of my classmates and professors who have small children if they would be willing to read it to their child and provide feedback. Feedback could be gathered via survey.	04/04/2012	2 hours	n/a
28	Reach out to the National Institute of Play to see if I could do a reading there.	04/04/2012	2 hours	n/a
29	Tweak story based on feedback and after some incubation time. Review book content to ensure it is meaningful.	04/08/2012	4 hours	n/a
	Total hours for this section		13	
	SECTION 4-6			
30	Outcomes Section: Review book and determine what pieces I would include (excerpts and images), as a couple of the activities.	04/09/2012	6 hours	n/a
31	Key Learning's: Document key learning's breaking them into categories to make it easier to read.	04/09/2012	6 hours	n/a
32	Conclusions: Write about any next directions or where I see myself going after this project.	04/09/2012	6 hours	n/a
33	Gather feedback from Sounding Board Partner and Advisor and make corrections.	04/23/2012	3 hours	n/a
34	Put project together in final form.	04/23/2012	3 hours	n/a

35	Prepare for project presentation.	04/23/2012	3 hours	n/a
Total hours for this section			27	
CELEBRATION				
36	Have a party with friends and family to celebrate completion of book.	05/11/2012	n/a	n/a
37	Review feedback and testimonials gathered from audience. Use some of these in book if there is enough time.	05/11/2012	2 hours	n/a
38	Sign up for New Experts Night in May	05/13 -05/15/2012	n/a	n/a
Total hours for this section			2	
TOTAL HOURS			154	

Section Four: What Will be the Tangible Product(s) or Outcomes?

The tangible product that will be produced as a result of this project is a children's book. This book will be self-published through LuLu.com and be available through Amazon.com.

The intangible result I am hoping to accomplish is a better understanding of Creativity as a life skill for both children and parents. My bigger goal is to impact parents in a way that they use the exercises provided to learn with their children. My hope is that they will become excited to share Creativity with their children and will see how these skills and behaviors can help their children grow into productive and creative adults. In addition, they will see the benefit it can have for them and their success and happiness as well. I truly believe that these skills do so much more than just help people professionally. I am hoping by using a simple story, playfulness and the practicality of simple exercises that encourage and enhance creativity that I can help make people of various ages more creative.

Section Five: Personal Learning Goals

There are several personal learning goals that I hope to accomplish as I work on and complete this project. I see this project as an opportunity to stretch, expand and combine skills I have learned throughout my career, my schooling and parenting. Below are the personal goals I have as I begin this project:

1. Throughout my career I have done a lot of classroom training. However, it wasn't until this program that I really understood and began practicing the concepts of Accelerated Learning. I would like to take the knowledge I have about Accelerated Learning and apply it to this book. I have not tried using accelerated learning activities without a facilitator, so I see this as a huge learning goal/experience. I foresee going through the instructions and activities several times and having people practice them without my help to see what questions they have or what areas they find challenging.
2. This project will provide me with an opportunity to collaborate with another Creative Studies Alumna. I am working on securing an illustrator from our program to help me with the illustrations for the book. I am excited about seeing what she will come up with and how she will help bring this story to life. Since I initiated the project, even though it will have both of our names attached to it, I see this as a leadership opportunity for myself. I believe my leadership style heavily involves collaboration. This is one of the first times I have done a project like this so it will be interesting to see it unfold and to see what I learn along the way about leadership and project management.
3. The biggest personal learning I foresee coming out of this project is my own development in creating something totally new when teaching creativity. I have always relied on the work others have done, and I have pulled together their concepts and ideas to present and teach creativity to others. I realize I will still be relying on others thoughts and concepts,

but I will not only be synthesizing that work, I will be adding my own elements and voice in this project.

4. As I go through this project, I am sure I will come back to the tools and skills I have acquired throughout this program. My first attempt at a project plan contained 276 hours of work for the project. I know at this point these are just estimations of the time it will take, but I can easily see how time management and change management will be important in not allowing this project get out of control. To get this project done on time, I can already see the amount of dedication, time management and problem solving I will need to do to stay on task.
5. Lastly, and probably most importantly, I am excited to take something I am passionate about and create a tangible product that I can be proud of. I have a lot of energy and passion around the power and potential of playfulness. I believe that we often have to justify why play is important and I am excited to be putting together a story for an audience that does it so naturally. I am hoping that parents will see playfulness as well as creativity in a new way through their children's eyes. I am hoping that this tangible product that I will be working on will provide me with joy and pride and I believe I will experience that the most when I see a parent and child experiencing the joy of Creativity together.

What Criteria Will You Use To Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Achievement?

The criteria I will use to measure the effectiveness of this achievement is that the book is completed and published by the end of the semester. I will be self-publishing the book so this goal is easily obtainable as long as all of the other benchmarks of writing and illustrating the

book are completed. The true measurement of effectiveness and achievement will again come with the joy and understanding of Creativity that parents and children experience as a result of the story.

Evaluation:

I will measure the effectiveness of the book by asking for feedback from parents and grandparents who agree to be part of my pilot group. I will use comment cards for any readings that may be done in the public Libraries or the Play Museum if I am able to read the book and do the exercises there. For any of the parents or grandparents who agree to be part of my pilot program I will send them an electronic survey using Survey Monkey or some other online survey tool to gather feedback. The results will be used to enhance the book and perhaps for testimonials to market the book.

I will also do a self-evaluation as part of the reflection process of this project. As part of the self-reflection, I will use PPCO to document the process and what I learned from it.

Stuart Brown, M. W. & Vaughen, C. (2010). *Play how it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*. New York: The Penguin Group.

Puccio, G.J. & Murdock, M. (2007). *Creativity Assessment Readings and Resources*. Amherst, MA: Creative Education Foundation Press.

Appendix B: Partial outline and Storyboard

Partial outline and Storyboard

The Magic Traveling Toothpaste Cap Outline Portion

Danny & Lance find the cap and run to ask their mom what it is. She explains it is the magic traveling toothpaste cap and that if they put it under their pillow they will dream of all the places it has been and things the cap saw on his adventures.

Dreams/Travel

First dream: The cap is from Russia and its owner is a fisherman who fishes for King crabs in the Bearing Sea between Russia and Alaska. The fisherman goes to brush his teeth and squeezes the toothpaste too hard (not realizing the cap is on it) and the cap flies out the window and is swallowed by a whale.

Dream two: The whale swims for a while and ends up in Alaska where a cruise ship is nearby. The whale coughs and blows the cap out of his blowhole and it lands on the cruise ship. From there it gets kicked around and lands in someone's luggage who goes home to Seattle.

Storyboard



Appendix C: Children's Book Research

Barnes & Noble Children's Book Research 03/09/12

On Friday March 9th, 2012 I went to Barnes & Noble with my nine year old niece Kayla. We went to the children's section so I could do some research on children's books. I also wanted to see what Kayla thought, which books she would choose, why she liked them, etc. She is a year past the age group I am targeting, but I thought I would still be able to get some interesting information from her. I also wanted to observe the other children to see what books they were drawn too, what questions they had, what they asked to buy, etc.

What I noticed while I was there was:

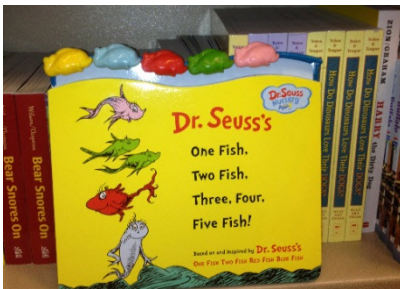
- ❖ Science is a very hot topic right now.
- ❖ Funny is universal and for all ages, the kids seemed drawn to the funny things.
- ❖ There were lots of series, it seemed that once a book concept became successful the author could really keep the concept and characters and follow them through other adventures or stories.
- ❖ The illustrations were either very colorful like *Dr. Suess* books, or they were black and white comic type. It was actually fascinating to me to see how simply some of the drawings were.
- ❖ There were vast options/types of books.
- ❖ The audience for some of the books was very easy to identify, there were some books that were clearly for girls while others were for boys.
- ❖ There were a lot books for ages 0 – 3 that had some kind of flair to them.
- ❖ My niece seemed drawn to the nook. I asked her to spend some time with the nook and write down what she liked about it. Kayla wrote "I like the nook because you can read, play games, and it's small and portable."
- ❖ A boy around eight years old who was in the store wanted rocks and stuff that had to do with magic.

Before leaving I talked to one of the employees at the store what the most popular books are. She said "For girls she said *Pinkalicious* and *Fancy Nancy* was popular. For boys she said

Joanaby Jones, *Captain Underpants* and the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series. *Doctor Suess* is of course always popular for both boys and girls and the sales seem to pick up when there is a movie like the *Lorax* out.”

I explained my project to her and asked if there was anything else she knew from being around kids and parents on a regular basis that might be helpful. She told me that consistently have parents looking for non-fiction books that deal with family issues and disabilities that would help parents talk to their kids about these things. So even though this book does not deal with any non-fiction topics like this, I thought it would be good to do a book on Tolerance for Ambiguity that addresses that could be tied to one of these topics.

Pictures of Books



Appendix D: Message to Parents

Message to Parents

The following story was written to enhance your child's creativity. Often when people see the word "creativity" they immediately think of artists, authors, etc. but we are all creative. Understanding and using our creativity enables us to create new products, services and novel solutions to problems. In a YouTube video entitled "**Creativity is an essential life skill**," Dr. Puccio talks about the rapid pace of change that we live in. He also talks about how "today's work has changed; it is much more geared toward the use of imagination and creativity." His research showed that "more than 70% of senior executives had innovation in their top drivers for growth, and that more than 86% of businesses included some form of the word innovation in their mission statement." Dr. Mark Batey agreed with Dr. Puccio in his video entitled "**Key Skill for the 21st is Creativity**", saying "I very much believe the key skill of the 21st century will be creativity." Between these two videos it is very easy to see how vital creativity is in the business world. But what about our children, are they getting these very necessary skills? Will they be ready when they enter the workforce? Dr. Batey also talks about a study of 300,000 American school children in his video which has found that since 1990 creative thinking skills have been in sharp decline in American schools.

But there's hope. Young children are naturally great examples of how we can be creative. Tim Brown stated in a TED Talk that "kids are more engaged with open possibilities. A child will ask what is it? When they come across something new, but they will also ask what can I do with it?" As children grow, trying to maintain their creativity can be a challenge. As parents we don't always have a good understanding of creativity is and how to nurture it.

There are several things you can do to encourage creativity in your children. For example, you can let them solve their own problems by coming up with many possible solutions. As your child works to solve the problem, ask them questions. These questions should be about more than just the facts involved, ask them "why" and "how" type of questions. This will help engage your child's creative thinking skills. If he or she makes a mistake, encourage them by explaining that we learn by mistakes. Other ways you can enhance both your child and your own creativity is to allow time for free play, vary your routine and read or listen to a variety of materials.

As children grow they begin to lose their openness to being creative, but since creativity is such an important skill, we as parents and teachers need to nurture creativity in ourselves and our children. Ken Robinson ended his TED talk with the following quote by Picasso "All children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up." Ken Robinson then added the following statement "I believe this passionately, that we don't grow into creativity, we grow out of it."

At the end of this story you will find several imagination activities you can do by yourself and with your children. Enjoy!

Appendix E: Casey Cap's Map

Casey Cap's Map

